

Southwest Resource Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, Oct. 1, 2004, 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Norwood Community Center
1670 Naturita Street
Norwood, Colorado

Resource Advisory Council Members

Don Bennett, Category 1	Nik Kendziorski, Category 2
Mallory Dimmitt, Category 2	Drew MacLeod, Category 1
Art Goodtimes, Category 2	Alan Staehle, Category 3
Andrew Gulliford, Category 2	Kathy Welt, Category 1
Anthony Gurzick, Category 3	Kelly Wilson, Category 3
Howard Heath, Category 1	

Andrea Robinsong (2), Ellen Stein (3), John Field (1) and Ann McCoy Harold (3) were not present.

BLM/USFS Staff

Barbara Sharrow	Mark Stiles
Dave Kauffman	Julie Stotler
Mel Lloyd	Karen Tucker
Juan Palma	David Baker

Visitors	Representing	Town/City
Mark Pearson	San Juan Citizens Alliance and HD coalition	Durango
Amber Clark	San Juan Citizens Alliance and HD coalition	Durango
Robert Delzell	Private Landowner	Bayfield
Kathleen Delzell	Private Landowner	Bayfield

Opening Remarks/Introductions

The meeting opened at 9:05 a.m. and a roundtable of introductions followed. *The attendees today constitute a quorum.* Chair Kathy Welt extended welcomes to new RAC members, Don Bennett and Drew MacLeod, as well as to Ellen Stein, who was not able to attend.

Field Manager Update

The Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) has received the Director's 4 C's Award in its work with partners on the Uncompahgre Project (UP). BLM Director Kathleen Clarke is traveling to Montrose for the award presentation on Oct. 28. The UFO had two Type II fires this past fire season and significant funding will be received for rehabilitating these burn areas.

Public Comment on the Northern San Juan Basin EIS is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Nov. 19 RAC meeting at the Durango Community Recreation Center.

No report was available for the Gunnison FO.

Old Business

Stiles provided an update on the San Juan Gold Exchange. The appraisal and survey work are being completed, and the project is moving forward.

Northern San Juan Basin EIS Subgroup Report

The public comment period was moved to follow this discussion to accommodate the public.

Stiles noted that contractual rights to mineral leases in the area have been sold through the years, and those who own them now are asking to use those rights. The HD Mountains are home to a 28,000-acre roadless area administered by the U.S. Forest Service and considered pristine by many, in addition to areas that have already been drilled. The comment period for the EIS had been extended through November 30, 2004.

Attendance at open houses was disappointing. Lon Abadie, Nik Kendziorski and Ann McCoy Harold are the Southwest RAC Northern San Juan Basin Natural Gas EIS subgroup members.

Kendziorski provided a brief subgroup update. Kendziorski felt that the process has been a good learning experience. Kendziorski added that distrust and concerns over long-term restoration efforts are major issues with the public, along with the roadless area's future. Links to these meeting notes and the EIS can be found online at www.usfs.fed.us/r2/sanjuan (USFS) and www.co.blm.gov (BLM).

Public Comment Period

Welt opened the public comment period at 11:25 a.m.

Mark Pearson, representing the San Juan Citizens Alliance and HD coalition, encourages exploring the use of horizontal drilling rather than vertical wells, where each well requires a constructed drill pad.

Amber Clarke, also with the San Juan Citizens Alliance and HD coalition, said area counties have passed or proposed Resolutions in opposition to the proposed level of activity in the Northern San Juan Basin.

Bob and Kathleen Delzell live very close to the proposed activity area. Kathleen and neighbors have formed the Yellow Jacket Outcrop Group to formally address and present their concerns regarding USFS 743 Road.

Western Slope Center Status Report

Juan Palma reported on the process he has undertaken in evaluating whether the WSC should be reorganized or remain unchanged. Juan will keep the RAC apprised of progress.

Field Office OHV Designations and Regulations

Dave Kauffman presented the report for the Gunnison FO. The Resource Management Plan (RMP) was amended in 1993, opening additional routes. Another amendment was processed in 2001 to mitigate impacts to natural resources. Trail inventories and mapping efforts are currently underway to assist in implementing new designations.

David Baker provided a report on travel management for the San Juan Public Lands Center. They are in the process of developing a plan revision for the area, and through travel management, intend to address issues in open areas.

Julie Stotler and Karen Tucker presented the UFO report. Highlights covered several areas, including Dominguez-Escalante, the North Fork Travel Management Area, San Miguel River Special Recreation Area, North Delta OHV Area and the Gunnison Gorge NCA. Links on the BLM SO web site (www.co.blm.gov) provide additional information.

Review Recreation Guidelines Approved by BLM and Colorado RACs

The BLM currently uses this document as a guide in managing recreation on public lands. The RAC suggested adding guidelines for local agencies and communities. Stiles would like to see CCI and similar organizations work on improved regulations encompassing out-of-state OHV users and use within communities, where federal agencies have no authority.

The RAC supports BLM's continued use of backcountry peer user groups working toward educating others. Staehle presented a motion for Stotler to draft a letter of support from the RAC in applying for an OHV grant outlining the use of these groups and their importance. Howard Heath seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period

There was no public comment.

Dominguez-Escalante Community Stewardship Plan Subcommittee

The Southwest RAC unanimously passed and executed this Joint Resolution in July, but it was not signed by the Northwest RAC in August. The document has been revised and a second Resolution drafted listing only the Southwest RAC. RAC members approved the letter unanimously and will form a subgroup at a later meeting.

Next Fiscal Year Meetings and Potential Topics

Discussions proceeded on establishing meetings for fiscal year (FY) 2005. RAC members will bring their calendars to the November meeting and set FY 2005 dates at that time.

Agenda topics for FY 2005 could include:

Northern San Juan Basin EIS

Proposed January 20-21 for joint RAC rangeland health training, Delta Field Manager reports and updates (standing topic)

Fuels program, Fire mitigation video

Western Slope Center status (Jan.)

Hartmann Rocks, including field trip (spring)

RAC OHV Safety Class in the field

Northern San Juan Basin EIS progress (Apr.-May)

Gunnison Sage-grouse, Gunnison Basin

San Juan Plan Revision with alternatives (July)

Science program

CPCESU

Uncompahgre Project Pinyon-Juniper Conference (May)

Forestry Practitioners Group (Oct 17-18)

Tamarisk Coalition/tamarisk removal efforts

Canyons of the Ancients update

Sage-grouse plan update

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.